# DARPA-BAA-14-49

# Frequently Asked Questions

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Q: If my research is relevant in this field, but is not geared specifically to meet these goals, is there a solicitation that I can respond to?**
A: Yes. DARPA/BTO has an Open solicitation (DARPA-BAA-14-38) for which responses are being collected through 30 Apr 2015.

**PROPOSALS**

**Q: Can a PI submit an idea both as an Advanced Study and as part of a Full Proposal?**
A: Yes, but the Government will not fund the same effort twice. Proposers to either track are encouraged to submit abstracts. Feedback from the abstract phase may help proposers decide the appropriate strategy.

**Q: How will proposals be reviewed? Peer review?**
A: Proposals will be reviewed by government officials and are not subject to peer review. The government may solicit input from subject matter experts who have been contracted by the government to perform this service.

**Q: If one wishes to propose to more than one Advanced Study area, does one need to submit multiple proposals?**
A: No. However, it is recommended that the cost proposals for each Advanced Study area be kept separate from one another to simplify the contracting process.

**COST/FUNDING**

**Q: Are grants part of the funding mechanism for either the Full Program or the Advanced Studies?**
A: No, only procurement contracts or other transactions.

**Q: Can you provide budget guidance?**
A: For Advanced Study proposals, it is expected that total costs/year should be in the range of $250-500K. Approximately $30M total is budgeted for the Full Program track in this BAA and it is expected that 3-5 awards will be made. Budgets must be clearly justified and commensurate with the effort and deliverables proposed.

**PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

**Q: How many awards are anticipated?**
A: We anticipate 3-5 full program awards and ~6 advanced study awards, but these numbers will depend on funding levels and the quality of the proposals.

**Q: The Full Program requires that proposers address all 3 Technical Areas. Must the effort be divided in 3 equal parts?**
A: There is no requirement for the effort to be divided in 3 equal parts. The BAA specifies specific milestones that need to be achieved in the 3 Technical Areas. It is up to the Proposer to determine how their efforts should be allocated to meet the milestones.

**Q: Can this program support industry/academic partnerships?**
A: Yes.

**Q: Do you prefer multi-disciplinary teams to be from one research group, multiple groups at one institution, or multiple institutions?**
A: There is no preference. Please note that the BAA requires all proposers to the Full Program or Advanced Study tracks to submit a Management Approach.

**TECHNICAL**

**Q: What is meant by an 'undomesticated' microorganism?**
A: Organisms that are commonly used as laboratory models (e.g., E. coli K12, B. subtilis, and S. cerevisiae) are considered domesticated. Undomesticated refers to organisms that have not been extensively passaged through a laboratory, for example, a recent isolate from an environmental sample.

**Q: While all work needs to be done in a completely controlled laboratory environment, can "starting materials" come from environmental samples, such as soil?**
A: Yes.

**Q: How do you define a microbial community? Multicellular organisms? Prokaryotes only? Single cell eukaryotes? Slime mold?**
A: For the purposes of this BAA, a microbial community may be comprised of prokaryotes, eukaryotes, archaea, or mixtures thereof. In instances when a multi-species community is requested, the organisms should be from different species as defined by standard phylogenetic methods. A multicellular organism with differentiated cells may be included, but is considered only a single species.

**Q: Does a consortium have to be multiple species? Can it be variants in one species?**
A: DARPA is interested in pushing the boundaries of engineering microbial consortia. Approaches that use only a single species or closely related strains are not encouraged.

**Q: Are there specific species that performers should use?**
A: No. However, proposers must consider the other requirements of the BAA, including those related to safety and scalability.

**Q: For issues related to the mutation rate, would it be acceptable to work on reducing the frequency of mutated cells in the population (rather than rate of mutations arising de novo)?**
A: Approaches in which mutants do occur, but are rapidly eliminated from the population will be considered.

**Q: Can experiments be done in an animal facility?**
A: Yes. However proposers must comply with all institutional, state, and federal requirements regarding animal use

**Q: Are living-nonliving hybrid approaches acceptable? (e.g., material approaches)**
A: Yes, but these approaches must be consistent with other requirements of the BAA, such as scalability.

**Q: May non-engineered organisms be used?**
A: Yes.